

# WIC Overseas office opens in Stuttgart

## *Individuals ineligible stateside may qualify in Europe*

Story & photos by Maria Higgins

With a snip of a red ribbon Feb. 28, 6th Area Support Group officials opened Stuttgart's office of Women, Infants and Children Overseas, a government-sponsored supplemental food and nutrition education program.

Available to stateside military families since 1972, WIC was mandated for service members across Asia and Europe in January 2001, but has not been accessible here until now.

The office joins branches already operating elsewhere in Germany as well as in England, Holland, Iceland, Spain, Belgium, Turkey, Italy, Japan and South Korea.

"This is a big thing, a wonderful thing for the Stuttgart community," said 6th ASG Commander Col. Larry Stubblefield, who signaled the program's importance by attending the grand opening despite scheduling difficulties.

"This is a force protection issue," he said. "Military members can't participate fully in their jobs if their families are not taken care of."

### Wide range of assistance

WIC Overseas aids families in numerous ways, most notably by providing nutritious foods such as iron-fortified formulas, cereals, milk, cheese and peanut butter to qualifying families at no cost.

Other assistance includes counseling and education on issues ranging from healthy meal-planning to breastfeeding.

Under the direction of Commissary Officer Steve Peterson, commissaries in the 6th ASG have responded to the program's launch by making it easy to manage item selection and check-out.

Red "WIC qualifying" stickers on store shelves identify healthy foods eligible for selection. Also, cashiers have been trained to recognize and quickly process the check-like "drafts" participants present to receive the items for free.



**Sherrie Martinez, 2, fuels up on a cracker at the open house buffet hosted by Stuttgart's new WIC office. [Inset] 6th Area Support Group Commander Col. Larry Stubblefield performs the ribbon-cutting honors for WIC Wellness Counselor Lori Dalbey-Kander.**

More than 25,000 service members participate in WIC Overseas, according to program officials. In the Stuttgart region, approximately 600 family members are eligible for the plan. Far fewer than that have enrolled thus far, however.

### WIC on the quick

WIC serves 45 percent of all children born in the United States, and one out of every four new mothers.

WIC-participating children have healthier diets, reduced rates of iron deficiency anemia and improved cognitive development.

A nutrition counselor will customize diets to fit each family's needs and lifestyle.

Participants incur no enrollment fees or other charges.

source: American Forces Press Service

Lori Dalbey-Kander, WIC Overseas wellness counselor and a registered nurse, estimates 200 people have signed up. She emphasized that WIC Overseas is funded by the Department of Defense as a quality-of-life benefit, and is something families should not hesitate to enjoy.

### Income cut-off higher in Europe

Service members may not realize eligibility rules for WIC Overseas are different than their stateside counterparts, Dalbey-Kander said. Income cut-offs, for instance, are actually higher for Europe-based service members, she explained.

Sponsors whose families include pregnant women, new mothers, infants or toddlers under 5 can make an appointment with the WIC Overseas office to determine if they qualify, Dalbey-Kander said. Family size, length of service and other criteria make qualifying a case-by-case situation.

Stuttgart's WIC Overseas office is located on Patch Barracks, building 2307. To make an appointment call 430-4608/civ. 0711-680-4608, or visit <http://tricare.osd.mil/wic/default.htm> for more information.

## Child and Youth Services fees change in Europe

By Melanie Casey

Many families in U.S. Army, Europe, with children attending Child Development Centers and School Age Services may soon start saving a little money on daycare fees.

The Army in Europe began implementing new Child and Youth Services fees March 1.

The new fees are based on changes issued by the Department of Defense. According to Sonia Bonet, chief of Child and Youth Services for U.S. Army, Europe, the command selects the lowest rate possible to determine the range of acceptable fees.

"Our goal is to provide affordable child care and youth programs for eligible families across the region," Bonet said, "while maintaining an atmosphere that meets and exceeds quality, safety and accreditation requirements."

What families pay for childcare is based on their Total Family Income. TFI is calculated using pay, allowances and housing amounts.

Once a family's TFI has been determined, it is assigned a category from 1 to 6. Category 1 families pay the lowest rates.

To establish the 2003 TFI and fee categories, CYS programs will use the 2003 Basic Allowance for Housing II chart and

Standardized Fee Tables	
2003 Child Development Centers	
Full-day program:	\$190 to \$476 per month
5-day preschool program:	\$76 to \$190 per month
3-day preschool program:	\$46 to \$76 per month
2-day preschool program:	\$30 to \$76 per month
Hourly program:	\$2 to \$2.50 per hour
2003 School-Age Services	
Before-school program:	\$18 to \$88 per month
After-school program:	\$42 to \$144 per month
Both programs:	\$54 to \$208 per month
Summer camp program:	\$34 to \$94 per month
Occasional user:	\$1.25 to \$1.50 per hour (and five free hours)
2003 Youth Sports Fee Schedule	
Soccer, flag football, cheerleading:	\$20 per child per sport
Baseball, softball, basketball, field hockey:	\$30 per child per sport
Tackle football, lacrosse, roller hockey:	\$50 per child per sport
Ice hockey, competitive swimming:	Fees determined locally



and paying the lowest fees.

Dual-military couples living off post will also benefit from the CYS fee changes.

Previously, the BAH for both service members was used to determine the family's TFI. Now, only the BAH of the senior member will be used, which could lower TFI and ultimately the family's category assignment.

New rates are not the only changes for CYS patrons.

Other discounts that will be available to families in the Europe region include the following:

- A 10-percent multiple-child discount for patrons using regular full-day and part-day CYS programs in Child Development Centers.

- School-age program discounts such as the open recreation discount (which offers five hours per month of free open recreation during weekday activities).

- A 10-percent discount for patrons using the before- and after-school programs.

For more information in Stuttgart call the CYS central registration office at 430-7458/civ. 0711-680-7458, visit the office in Patch Barracks' building 2347, or log onto [www.mwr-europe.com](http://www.mwr-europe.com).

In Garmisch call 440-2684/civ. 08821-750-684.

the December 2002 Leave and Earnings Statement.

The 2003 pay adjustment will not be included when determining 2003 TFI.

One significant change that began

March 1 is that the income limit for Category 1 families was raised from \$23,000 to \$28,000.

This means families can now earn up to \$28,000 while remaining in Category 1